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Letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to inform you of the latest developments regarding the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Ta'izz governorate, which continues to suffer from a crippling blockade imposed by the Houthi-Saleh rebel militia.

Despite statements from the United Nations, international organizations operating in that area continue to cooperate with the Houthis as if they were not the party responsible for the total blockade imposed on the governorate and for the humanitarian crimes being committed daily against civilians.

After five months of the blockade on Ta'izz and its four million inhabitants, the suffering of civilians in Ta'izz continues with no end in sight, in spite of agreements on the opening of safe humanitarian corridors into Ta'izz and the release of detainees reached by Government and rebel delegations at the second round of peace consultations conducted from 15 to 20 December 2015 under the auspices of your Special Envoy. Not only has the rebel side has done nothing to alleviate that suffering; it has tightened its repressive grip on the people of Ta'izz, which extends to their civilian health and education facilities, not to mention their homes.

The punishment being inflicted on Ta'izz by the Houthi rebels and Saleh loyalists is a stain on humanity. There is ample evidence that Houthi warlords and followers of the former president are stealing humanitarian assistance provided by international humanitarian organizations and enriching themselves on a black market that trades on the blood, suffering and pain of the people of Yemen.

To our deep regret, to date we have not heard any statements from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or the resident coordinator making clear to the international community the gravity of the extremely dire humanitarian situation in Ta'izz.

The Houthi-Saleh rebel side has failed to implement the confidence-building measures that were agreed at the second round of consultations in Switzerland this past December. In particular, it has failed to lift the blockade imposed on Ta'izz and allow humanitarian assistance to reach the besieged inhabitants of the city who need it. That stance presages a major humanitarian catastrophe. In its most recent press release, the World Food Programme warns of the possibility of widespread starvation in that long-suffering yet steadfast city.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Republic of Yemen, we urge you to take immediate action to end the suffering of the people of that governorate.

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The use of starvation as a weapon of war is a war crime punishable under international humanitarian law with no statute of limitations. The international community should take a determined stand on such flagrant violations.

We transmit herewith a letter from political parties, citizen groups and civil society organizations requesting your urgent intervention to put an end to the suffering of the people of Ta'izz governorate.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Khaled Hussein **Alyemany**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 7 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

In its press release of 23 December 2015, the United Nations Security Council called on the Houthi-Saleh rebel coalition to lift its blockade on Yemeni cities, particularly Ta'izz governorate.

Nevertheless, the rebels are continuing to subject Ta'izz to horrific bombardments and attacks with heavy, medium and light weapons. On Wednesday, 30 December 2015, Al-Thawrah Hospital, the city's last functioning hospital, was bombed and destroyed in an unprecedentedly vicious criminal attack that went against all humanitarian values.

The city of Ta'izz has been under a total blockade for some time. Many of its inhabitants have been killed, and defenceless civilians have been displaced. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated to an unbearably painful degree. Foodstuffs and medicines are unobtainable. Many people are dying every day as a result of the blockade and vicious bombing by the rebels, who have rejected the authoritative resolutions adopted by the United Nations. Humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations has failed to reach its rightful recipients. Instead, it has been seized by the rebels in the areas under their control.

The Yemeni political forces that have been adhering to international resolutions and calling for implementation of Security Council resolution 2216 (2015) hereby call on you, in the name of humanity and in compliance with international instruments, to intervene immediately to bring an end to the blockade of the city and save its inhabitants.

Your prompt intervention would play a major role in ensuring that the coming round of consultations on the implementation of resolution 2216 (2015) is convened in an atmosphere conducive to furthering your efforts to bring stability to Yemen.

Yemeni political forces:

The Yemeni Islah Party
The peaceful Southern Movement coalition
The Nasserist Unionist People's Organization
The Yemeni Socialist Party
The First Southern Conference (Cairo)
The General People's Congress
The Higher Coordination Body of the Yemeni Revolution
The National Solidarity Party
The Yemeni Guidance Party
The Justice and Reconstruction Party
The Awakening Movement for Peaceful Change
The Council for Youth and Peaceful Revolution
Representatives of youth and women